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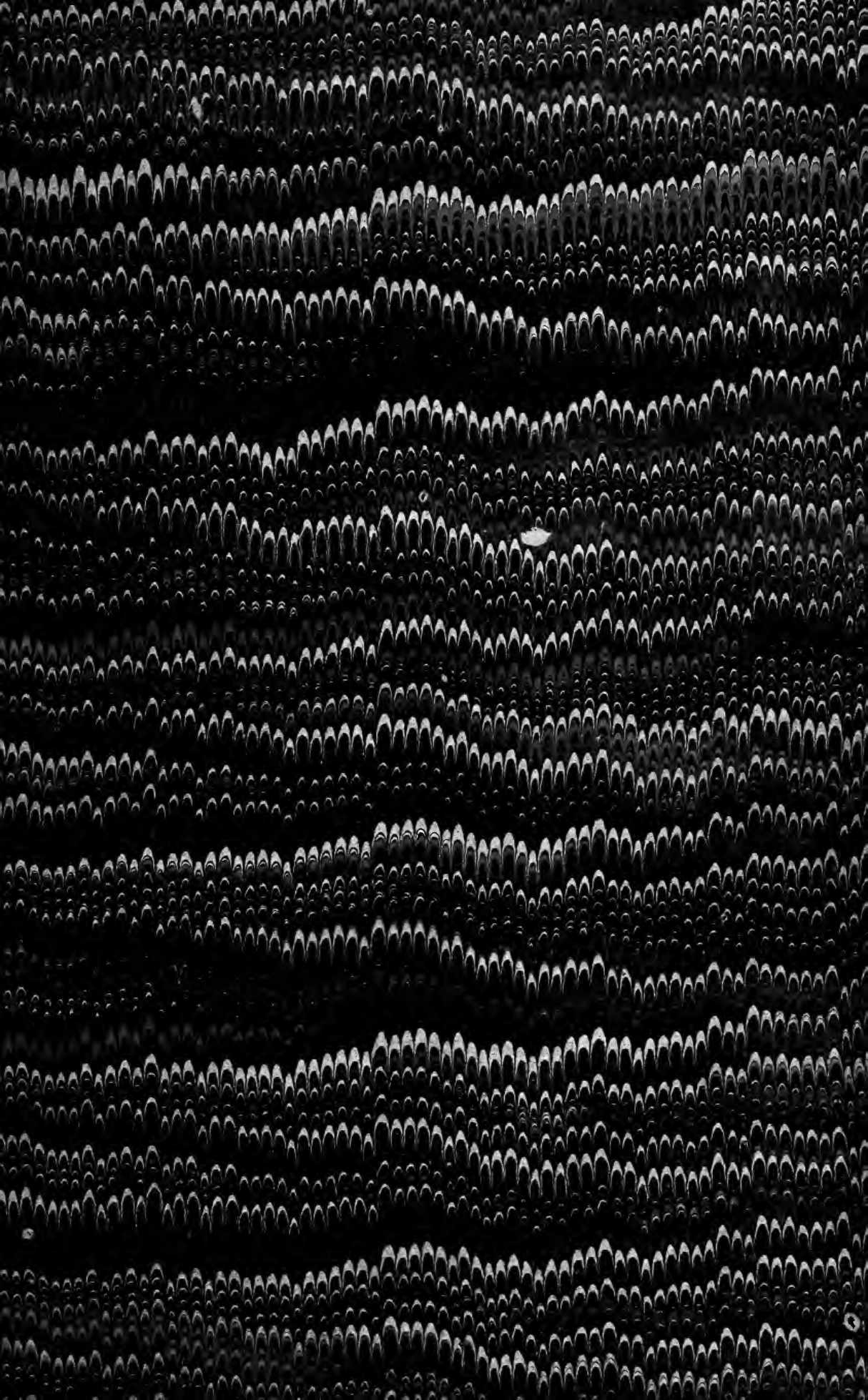
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HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF

Oberlin College.

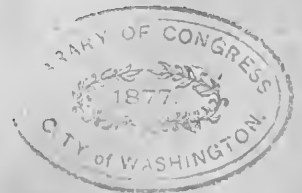
HISTORICAL SKETCH
OF
OBERLIN COLLEGE

BY
Rev. E. H. FAIRCHILD,

PRINCIPAL PREPARATORY DEPARTMENT

AND
GENERAL AGENT,

Oberlin, Ohio, 1868.



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OBERLIN COLLEGE.

The plan of Oberlin originated in 1832, with Rev. John J. Shipherd, then pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Elyria, and P. P. Stewart, formerly a missionary among the Southern Indians. It was an offspring of the wonderful revivals of 1830, '31 and '32, in which Mr. Shipherd was a most faithful, prudent and successful laborer.

The plan involved a school for both sexes, with Preparatory, Teachers', College and Theological Departments; furnishing a substantial education at the lowest possible rates; with such facilities for self-support as the "Manual Labor System" was supposed to afford. The school was to be surrounded by a Christian community, united in the faith of the Gospel, and in self-denying efforts to establish and sustain the school.

The location selected was in a dense, unbroken forest, eight miles from Elyria and thirty-three from Cleveland. It was level, clayey and uninviting. Many are still unreconciled to the choice. Its advantages were, that it was unoccupied, and was surrounded by a growing population of New England origin. Many more delightful locations might have been found in Northern Ohio, but who will venture to say that a better site could have been selected for Oberlin? Believers in Divine Providence, who, like the writer, were privileged to listen to the fervent prayers that attended every step of the founders of the Institution, and have seen how wonderfully their plans succeeded, will be slow to criticise their work.

The name of the school and colony was borrowed, not from Oberlin the elegant scholar, but from Oberlin the Swiss pastor, who represented, in his self-denying and efficient life, that love towards God and that sympathy with man which were to be cherished here.

The plan of the school and place having been matured, the location fixed, the name selected, and Trustees appointed, Mr. Shipherd was sent abroad to secure funds and inhabitants. No new principle of social organization was proposed, but those who were ready

to volunteer in the enterprise were asked to indicate their consecration to the work by subscribing to the following articles of agreement, called the Oberlin Covenant:

"Lamenting the degeneracy of the Church and the deplorable condition of our perishing world, and ardently desirous of bringing both under the entire influence of the blessed gospel of peace; and viewing with peculiar interest the influence which the Valley of the Mississippi must exert over our nation and the nations of the earth; and having, as we trust, in answer to devout supplications, been guided by the counsel of the Lord: the undersigned covenant together under the name of the Oberlin Colony, subject to the following regulations, which may be amended by a concurrence of two-thirds of the colonists:

1. Providence permitting, we engage as soon as practicable to remove to the Oberlin Colony, in Russia, Lorain county, Ohio, and there to fix our residence, for the express purpose of glorifying God in doing good to men to the extent of our ability.

2. We will hold and manage our estates personally, but pledge as perfect a community of interest, as though we held a community of property.

3. We will hold in possession no more property than we believe we can profitably manage for God; as his faithful stewards.

4. We will, by industry, economy, and Christian self-denial, obtain as much as we can above our necessary personal or family expenses, and faithfully appropriate the same for the spread of the gospel.

5. That we may have time and health for the Lord's service, we will eat only plain and wholesome food, renouncing all bad habits, and especially the smoking and chewing of tobacco, unless it is necessary as a medicine, and deny ourselves all strong and unnecessary drinks, even tea and coffee, as far as practicable, and everything expensive, that is simply calculated to gratify the palate.

6. That we may add to our time and health money for the service of the Lord, we will renounce all the world's expensive and unwholesome fashions of dress, particularly tight dressing and ornamental attire.

7. And yet more to increase our means of serving Him who bought us with his blood, we will observe plainness and durability in the construction of our houses, furniture, carriages, and all that appertains to us.

8. We will strive continually to show that we, as the body of Christ, are members one of another; and will, while living, pro-

vide for the widows, orphans, and families of the sick and needy as for ourselves.

9. We will take special pains to educate all our children thoroughly, and to train them up in body, intellect and heart for the service of the Lord.

10. We will feel that the interests of the Oberlin Institute are identified with ours, and do what we can to extend its influence to our fallen race.

11. We will make special efforts to sustain the institutions of the gospel at home and among our neighbors.

12. We will strive to maintain deep-toned and elevated personal piety, to "provoke each other to love and good works," to live together in all things as brethren, and to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his.

In testimony of our fixed purpose thus to do, in reliance on divine grace, we hereunto affix our names."

These articles served their main purpose in bringing together families devoted, not only to a common end, but agreeing in their views of practical duty and the means of promoting religious education. After a few years, the letter of the covenant was essentially laid aside, but the spirit of it has, in a good degree, been maintained till the present time.

In December, 1833, the school was opened with forty-four pupils from the States of New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan. These students were not children of the colonists, but young men and women of earnest religious character, who, on their own account, had made their way to the wilderness, to aid in the organization and enjoy the benefits of this Christian college. The religious exercises which preceded the opening of the school are still spoken of, by those who were present, as of very solemn interest. While the meeting was in progress, J. F. Scovill, the young teacher who was to have temporary charge of the school, entered the place and went immediately to the chapel. When invited to speak, his first words expressed the thought of all present: "Put off thy shoes from thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." The same feeling, in great measure, has pervaded the place to the present day. The following Spring, the writer took Oberlin on his way home from school; and he became so impressed with the earnest and happy religious character of the students and the people, that on reaching home and being asked by his parents where he had been, he replied that he felt as if he had been in heaven.

The piety that prevailed here at that early period was not of the

sort which rejoices in quiet and seclusion; but of the kind which "lamented the degeneracy of the church and the deplorable condition of our perishing world," and led to earnest consecration of property and life to the work of reformation and salvation. A large portion of the students first on the ground had their eye upon the foreign missionary field, and were pledged, if the way should be open, to spend their lives among the heathen. Few of them actually went; for, when they were prepared, no missionary society desired to send them; and they found at home a more trying and self-denying work to do.

It was not till the winter of 1834-5 that Oberlin took its position on the question of slavery. Previous to that time no special interest had been taken in that subject. The inhabitants, like almost all people at the North, believed that slavery was a great evil, but trusted to the Colonization Society to mitigate and remove it. Abolitionism disturbed several other places in Ohio some months earlier than it reached Oberlin.

At Lane Seminary, a Presbyterian Theological School near Cincinnati, a class of students had gathered of unusual ability and energy. Many of them were from Oneida Institute, a manual labor school in Central New York. Some were sons of slaveholders in the South. From all parts of the country they were gathered, to the number of a hundred or more. Among them were such men as Theodore Weld, a man of surpassing eloquence and power, Geo. Whipple, A. W. Alvord, J. A. Thome, Geo. Clark, S. W. Streeter, Hiram Wilson, and others not unknown to those who have been familiar with some of the most stirring portions of our history for the last thirty years. Over them all Dr. Beecher and Prof. Stowe presided, as chief instructors.

To their beautiful retreat on Walnut Hills, just on the dividing line between Slavery and Freedom, the spirit of abolitionism found its way. For eighteen successive evenings the discussion waxed warmer and warmer, while those earnest young men sought not the victory in argument, but to determine the course of their future lives. They knew that scorn, contempt, slander, persecution, disinheritance, awaited them, if they espoused the cause of the slave; but with them it was a question of duty, not of profit. And, with many prayers and tears and consecrations to God, as well as discussions and searchings after truth, they took their position, and cast in their lot with the most oppressed and most despised of God's creatures. It was such a scene as is not witnessed in this world more than once in a century. To their surprise, these devoted young men, whose hearts had long yearned for the

heathen, found a missionary field in Cincinnati; and just over the river a vast territory where millions of men were excluded from civilization and the privileges of the gospel. They commenced their missionary work at once, in schools and Sabbath-schools among the colored people; and for their reward received the reproach and disgust of many who would have supported and honored them, if they had sought the same work in Africa.

The Trustees of the Seminary were alarmed at the aspect of things, and with such a view of their responsibility as sometimes unmans even good men, during the Summer vacation passed a rule forbidding the further discussion of the subject of slavery on the premises of the Institution. Prof. Morgan, then in New York, was informed that his services were no longer needed. No reason was assigned, but it was well known that his sympathies were with the students. The young men returned to enter their protest against the gag-law, and to ask dismissal from the Institution. Four-fifths of them left in a body, and Lane Seminary has probably never recovered from the blow. By a similar stroke of policy, Western Reserve College was almost ruined about the same time. Both these Institutions are now, and long have been, entirely sound on this subject.

The protesting students, upon the invitation of James Ludlow, a wealthy gentleman residing a few miles from the city, took possession of a building which he provided, and continued their studies and discussions for five months, no man forbidding. This was the condition of things when Mr. Shipherd, prosecuting his agency for Oberlin, visited Cincinnati. He was prepared to enter into sympathy, at once, with the seceding students, and to invite them to Oberlin. But Oberlin was under the management of Trustees; and every citizen in the place, and every Professor and student, claimed a right to a voice in determining the fundamental character of the school. They had sacrificed much in coming here, and had come for the sake of the school. Could they consent that this college and this place should be made the hot-bed of abolitionism? This was the question; for the condition on which the seceders of Lane would come was that in this Institution students should be received irrespective of color. And on this condition Prof. Morgan was willing to become a Professor, and Rev. Asa Mahan, then pastor of the Sixth Presbyterian Church in Cincinnati, was willing to accept the Presidency. He had been a member of the Board of Trustees of Lane, and had resigned when the gag-law was passed against his earnest protest. On this condition, too, Arthur Tappan, that noble man, was willing to give \$5,000 for a

building, and Prof. Finney was ready to come. This question, "Shall students be received irrespective of color?" was submitted to the Trustees and people of Oberlin. At first, it staggered them. The citizens were greatly agitated; young ladies from New England declared that if colored students were admitted, they would return home, if they had to "wade Lake Erie" to accomplish it. Some of the brave girls lived to wade through deeper and stormier seas, in working for the oppressed and despised race. To the few whose minds were already made up, it was interesting and charming to see with what earnest prayerfulness and honest investigation the mass of the people sought to reach a decision acceptable to God. For several weeks this was the sole topic of discussion in public meetings and in private circles, at the tables and by the way; and constantly the conviction was settling down upon the people that He who made of one blood all the children of men would not be offended to see them enjoying the privileges of education in the same school.

A meeting of the Trustees was called; and, to avoid the excitement at Oberlin, they held their session at the Temperance House in Elyria. A petition was sent to them by the principal colonists and such students as were present, (for it was vacation,) the latter clause of which beautifully exhibits the religious sincerity with which they prosecuted the discussion of this question. It is as follows: "Therefore, your petitioners respectfully request that your honorable body will meet at Oberlin, that your deliberations may be heard and known on the great and important questions in contemplation. We feel for our black brethren—we feel to want your counsels and instructions; we want to know what is duty, and, God assisting us, we will lay aside every prejudice, and do as we shall be led to believe God would have us to do."

The Trustees adjourned without reaching a decision. They were called together again, and met at the house of Mr. Shipherd, in his absence. Mrs. Shipherd, engaged in her household duties, often passed the door, which stood ajar, and at length, in her anxiety, stopped before it. Father Keep, the moderator, comprehended her solicitude, and, stepping out, informed her that the result was doubtful. She immediately dropped her work, gathered the praying sisters of the neighborhood, and they continued in prayer till the decision was announced. The question was decided in the affirmative, by the casting vote of Father Keep. God bless the good old man, now eighty-seven. Thus the Rubicon was passed, and henceforth the name of Oberlin was a hissing and a by-word throughout the land.

In the Spring of 1835, Oberlin received the accession of thirty students from Lane; and, soon after, about fifteen noble young men from Western Reserve College; all of whom had sacrificed every hope of popularity and position, and some of them heritage, parents and home, under a deep conviction of duty to God and man. To this rough opening in the wilderness, through miles of almost bottomless mud, they came, and cheerfully took up their abode in barracks extemporized for their reception, 144 feet long, 24 feet wide, and 10 feet high, constructed of rough beech boards and slabs, and divided into rooms 12 feet square, all opening into the surrounding forest. Of the thrilling meetings that were then held, the burning eloquence of President Mahan, the tearful appeals of Prof. Morgan, in behalf of the enslaved, words fail to tell, as they appeared to my youthful mind. In the Autumn of the same year, Weld gave us a series of over twenty lectures, to equip the young warriors for the Winter campaign. Year after year, some of the Professors, and such of the students as were deemed qualified, spent the Winter vacation in lecturing under the auspices of the American Anti-Slavery Society, or the Ohio State Society. And scores of ladies and gentlemen engaged in teaching colored schools in various cities of the North, and in Canada, wherever a sufficient number of pupils could be gathered; and often for no pay beyond their expenses. Of the trials they endured, in lack of sympathy and encouragement, while, from a sense of duty, they contended against their own hereditary prejudices; in exclusion from society, and from every position of profit or honor; in want of confidence and Christian fellowship; from scorn, contempt and ridicule; from hisses, sneers, epithets and slander; from rotten apples, rotten eggs and mobs, it is needless to speak. The sufferings of those times were not worthy to be compared with the glory already revealed.

The schools our students taught were called "nigger" schools, the churches where they preached were "nigger" churches; the preachers themselves were "nigger" men. Oberlin was a "nigger" town. Even the silent guide-boards near the place were made to speak the contempt of the people. Not many years ago, on one of them, six miles from here, the direction to Oberlin was indicated by the picture of a negro running with all his might to reach the place. A tavern sign, on the Oberlin side, was ornamented by the representation of a panting negro, pursued by a tiger.

But all these trials had their compensation. The thanks of the poor and despised for a few white teachers, who were willing to

endure hardship for them, were no formal expressions; the joyful, tearful "God bless you!" of the hunted fugitive, when left beyond the reach of danger, was sufficient reward for a night of toil and exposure; the warm receptions to be met with from a few friends of the slave, to be found in almost every place, or even the excitements of a mob, were better than cold formality or dead monotony. But, above all, the consciousness of God's favor, the firm confidence of ultimate triumph, visions of the country and the slave redeemed in the distant future—for few hoped to see it in their day—and hopes of final vindication, both on earth and in heaven, were the chief support in every trial.

At this point in the history of Oberlin, and for this reason, the great, and general, and long continued opposition to the Institution and place commenced. Previous to this there had been very little. The friends of Western Reserve College, fifty miles distant, naturally felt that Oberlin was encroaching on their territory; and the friends of Oberlin felt under obligation to explain that the Institutions were so distinct in character that they could hardly be regarded as rivals. Further than this, there was no opposition worthy of notice. But when Oberlin took a position antagonistic to those two Institutions, which were then the hope and the pride of the Presbyterian Church at the West, welcomed, approved and applauded their protesting students, it was not in human nature to look on with composure. Oberlin was at once regarded as the seat of folly and fanaticism, a disturber of the peace of the country and the church, an enemy to be fought and destroyed, and no longer a sister Institution. And, in this controversy, the advantage was all on their side. They were established Institutions, and had the support of a large and powerful church. The press, the pulpit, the political parties, and the prejudices of the people were all in their favor, and made their cause common. No good was expected from such a place, but every evil was looked for. Every mistake, every indiscretion, every sin, was eagerly seized upon, exaggerated and paraded before the public. The doctrines taught here were misunderstood and misrepresented. Good men shunned the place, bad men slandered it, and nearly all believed the slanders. The monstrous lies of a renegade student, who had been excommunicated from the church for profanity and infidelity, and expelled from the Society of Inquiry for ribald and blasphemous language, were credited, while the calm statements of the best of men made but little impression.

Of the many strange rumors, slanderous reports, and wonderful exaggerations, which gained currency while this state of the pub-

lic mind prevailed, it is needless to speak. A few specimens must suffice. It was rumored, and extensively believed, that the Institution was overwhelmed with Negroes, that each white student was compelled to room and sleep with a colored one, when there was but one colored pupil in the school, and not half a dozen colored persons in the county. A white student boarding at Mr. Shipherd's consented, on request, to take the colored servant, a feeble girl, to his home, a few miles distant, that she might have the benefit of a ride, according to the advice of her physician. An extra of the county paper was immediately published, giving a glowing account of the matter, and expatiating largely upon the frightful tendencies of Oberlin fanaticism. The next Cleveland paper came out with a wonderful article, headed "Marriage Extraordinary;" in which a most glowing and sarcastic account was given of the marriage of a white student of Oberlin to a colored girl. This article was copied into not less than forty papers, in all parts of the United States. It was very commonly believed that amalgamation was the common doctrine and practice of Oberlin. The fact is, that, though five or six per cent. of our students have been colored for the last thirty years, not a single case has occurred of marriage or attachment between a white student and one in whom there was any "visible admixture of African blood." Some unknown person wrote several anonymous letters, of the vilest character imaginable, to several virtuous young ladies, the friends and companions of young men here, and one of them, a *special* friend of one of the young men; and he, fired with indignation at the villainous insult to his betrothed, with the aid of a few others, one night, entrapped the fellow, flogged him, and sent him out of town. The following day, a public meeting was called, and the act and unknown actors were thoroughly rebuked; though the provocation was admitted to be great. Several of the young men, on cooler reflection, were convinced that their great indignation had betrayed them into an unjustifiable act, and made public confession. On this confession they were arrested, convicted, and severely fined. The most exaggerated accounts of this transaction, more regretted in Oberlin than anywhere else, were published throughout the land and charged upon Oberlin itself, as a legitimate outgrowth of its fanatical and heretical teachings. It was reported and believed that the young man died of the injuries received. But he is still alive, and is a good and useful man. One evening, after an exciting debate between the President and the Professor of Languages on the study of the heathen classics, a few of the students, more in sport than in seriousness, fired their Virgils and tossed them

about the streets. The next morning they had their lessons in Virgil, as usual, and continued from year to year the usual classical course. But their foolish act was published through the country as the act of the college, discarding the classics. There was a time when some portions of the ordinary classical course were omitted, and other linguistic studies substituted. But there never was a time when the course in Languages was not equal in amount to that of other first-class colleges. It would be easy to fill a volume with accounts of similar slanders and exaggerations. These statements are made to show how admirably the public mind was prepared to discover dangerous and damnable heresy in any new phase of doctrine that might be preached in Oberlin.

Of the doctrine of Sanctification, or Christian Perfection, as taught and held at Oberlin, I must not speak at length; yet, in any extended historical account of the Institution, it could not properly be omitted. At the organization of the Theological Department, on receiving the accession from Lane, Rev. Charles G. Finney, the great revival preacher of New York, was appointed Professor of Theology. He was at that time a Congregational pastor in the city, and advocated those views of doctrine commonly designated New School Theology; and, perhaps, no man has done more to establish and extend that system of doctrine than he. From the commencement of his remarkable career as a preacher, many excellent men rejected some of his doctrines and criticised his revival measures. Yet so wonderful was his success, so manifestly were his labors attended with the Divine blessing, that opposition was made with great caution, and with little effect. His sermons were published weekly in the New York Evangelist, as Beecher's have been in the Independent; and, by a large portion of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, he was regarded as a safe and sound leader. On his way to Oberlin, an effort was made to divert him to Western Reserve College. An announcement of his appointment to a Theological Professorship in that Institution met him in Cleveland. It seemed to them a great pity that a man of such eminent power and usefulness in the church should give his influence to a scheme so utopian. But Mr. Finney was not thus impressed by what he saw here. He was a man who knew but one line of policy—to find out the will of God, and do it. This enterprise, he was convinced, was of God. The spirit of the Lord seemed to be here, and the principles which had been adopted were right and true. He added his peculiar power to the influences already gathered, and no man has done more to give character and power to the school and the place.

The influence of such a man, whose whole life and power were devoted to the one great object of turning sinners to God, on a community already so thoroughly religious and earnest, tended to produce such an intensity of religious feeling and consecration as has seldom been witnessed. It was not a development of boisterous, noisy, senseless excitement; there was always perfect order, and, in general, great stillness and quiet. Occasionally, responses, sobs and sighs were heard, and sometimes a secret prayer, in the forest or college hall, unnecessarily loud; but this was never a prominent feature of the religion of Oberlin. Nor was there any marked tendency to asceticism and penance; to sadness and melancholy; to sourness, severity, uncharitableness. The society of Oberlin has always been characterized by cheerfulness, joyfulness, sociality, kindness and charity. It is a thing of almost daily occurrence for visitors and students to express their surprise at finding the character of the people, in this respect, so different from their expectations. But there was among the people a spirit of entire consecration to God; a disposition to subject everything to his will, and enlist everything in his service. It was their aim to eat and drink and dress, to buy and sell and save and give, to build, adorn and furnish, to work and play and visit, to sing and teach and learn, to discuss and vote and pray, for the glory of God. Religious obligation was recognized in every movement. In every gathering, whether for literary, social, financial or political purposes, God's presence and blessing were invoked. This habit still continues, with little neglect. Every recitation, though often there are fifty in a day, commences with a brief religious exercise, either singing or prayer. And it is a very interesting and profitable custom, which we could by no means be induced to abandon.

In the practical application of the principle of entire consecration to God, there were, of course, diversities of views; and if a few extremists entertained impracticable and absurd ideas of economy and retrenchment, it was no new or wonderful thing. A few young persons, for a few weeks, lived on bread and water. They argued that if prisoners at hard labor could do it, and maintain their health, surely students could. A fair trial dissipated their notions. One man, I remember, estimated the extra buttons on men's coats at church, and reported at the next prayer meeting how many Bibles they would buy for the heathen. But he never impressed such ideas on a member of his own family. Another, on warm Sabbaths, would attend church barefoot, and sit in a conspicuous place, where his light might shine, and his example rebuke the extravagance of those who indulged in useless covering for the feet.

This same man I afterwards saw sporting a gold-headed cane and a gold ring. He was cured of his folly—cured extremely.

For such extravagancies Oberlin was not responsible, but was held accountable. They were such abnormal developments as are met with occasionally in every community. But the mass of the people were entirely rational, and it was delightful to see with what conscientiousness, and, in general, with what discretion they endeavored to apply the principles of the gospel to all the affairs of daily life. "Holiness to the Lord" was the motto upon the streamer which waved above the great tent provided for Mr. Finney by friends in New York, and "Holiness to the Lord" was the pervading spirit of the place.

Such was the religious condition of Oberlin when the discussion of Christian perfection, which originated in New England, reached the place. The discussion commenced among the students. The doctrine, as at first presented, taught that Christians never sin; that the spirit of Christ within them controls their powers, and is responsible for all they do; that they are above all law, for the Spirit within them is the author of law; and they are free to do as they please, for their pleasure is the pleasure of Christ. The doctrine, as thus presented, was unanimously rejected. Not more than two of the students embraced it. They were in the Preparatory Department, and remained but a short time. The students generally had been educated in the belief that "No man is able, either of himself or by any grace received in this life, perfectly to keep the commandments of God; but doth daily break them in thought, word and deed;" that one use of the moral law to men is "to convince them of their disability to keep it;" that our most holy acts of repentance, consecration and prayer, are sinful, and of necessity so, because all the requirements of God are above our ability. They supposed that, as soon as a Christian became free from sin, he would be removed to heaven by death or translation. But the New School Theology, to which they had been introduced, taught that God requires nothing impossible; that without ability there is no moral obligation; that a command of God to man is proof of man's ability to obey. God commands the sinner to repent, therefore he can repent; to come to Christ, therefore he can come; to make him a new heart, therefore, in the sense required, he can make him a new heart. From this position, which seemed scriptural, rational, axiomatic, it was but a step to the conclusion—Jesus Christ commanded his disciples, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;" therefore, in the sense required, they can be perfect. He commands them to love

God with all the heart, therefore, with the grace provided, they can love Him with all the heart. From this step, the next, to their earnest, practical minds, was simple and natural: If God requires us to be perfect, to live without sin, and we are able to obey Him, we should aim to do so. And we should aim at this as a thing possible, practicable, and not as a thing entirely beyond our reach. In this shape the subject was presented before a special meeting of the Young Men's Missionary Association. A resolution was introduced, in substance as follows—(the resolution itself is not to be found)—“Resolved, that having lived far beneath our obligations as Christians, and acknowledging our duty and ability, with Divine assistance, to obey the command, ‘Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,’ we hereby renew our consecration to God, and will henceforth endeavor, trusting in Divine grace, to live entirely free from sin.” After an earnest discussion of about four hours, the resolution was unanimously adopted, over twenty young men being present. Then followed a prayer meeting of about two hours. A more solemn and impressive scene is seldom witnessed. The next day the report went out that the Missionary Society had all become perfectionists. I never heard that any one of them ever claimed that he had lived a week or a day without sin. Yet it was their honest and earnest aim to live so, and, doubtless, many days passed, with some of them, in which they were not conscious of having violated this most solemn covenant of their lives. A few months from this time, at the close of a sermon by the President, in which he had set forth Jesus as a savior from the moral turpitude, as well as the guilt of sin, and had exhorted christians to look to him for succor in temptation, a young man arose and begged permission to ask how much he might depend upon the Savior for. Might he pray and hope to be kept entirely free from sin? He was answered that he might hope to be much more holy than he had been. But not satisfied, he pressed the inquiry, how much sin he might hope to be saved from, and how much he must commit. No satisfactory answer was given. But the subject, thus opened for consideration, was not dismissed till leading members of the Faculty were prepared to take their position; and soon the whole community became interested.

What has been, and what is now, the position of Oberlin on this subject? I speak not by authority, but as one who has been interested and active in this discussion from the beginning. It has been held—

1. That moral obligation implies ability. That no man, saint or

sinner, is, at any time, in any circumstances, under obligation to do what he cannot do, at that time, and in those circumstances.

2. That God requires the entire and perpetual consecration of all our powers to his service; nothing more, and nothing less.

3. That one who honestly aims, intends, at all times, or at any time, to employ all his powers, according to his best judgment, in the service of God, discharges his whole duty for the time being. All acts, all feelings, all affections, required at the time, will certainly and necessarily attend right intention. As this is the best one can do, it is all he is required to do.

4. That it should be the aim of every one to live such a life habitually; and the grace of God is proffered to incite and strengthen us to such a life. And right intention implies that we avail ourselves of that grace according to our best knowledge and ability.

5. That the first step of the christian life is entire consecration to God. If one intentionally, voluntarily, falls short of God's requirements, in strength of will, or in any other respect, on his first attempt at serving God, he is not submissive, and is not converted.

6. That the christian, who, in after life, falls below the entire consecration implied in the first act of religion, comes under the displeasure of God, and no service of his will be acceptable, till he returns to the spirit of obedience.

7. That a life of entire and constant consecration to God is the best we can live, and all that he requires; and, hence, is a perfect christian life. Perfection that implies more than this is a perfection not required.

Such are the positions that have been maintained in Oberlin on this subject, and are still maintained. I have purposely avoided technical language, that I may not be misunderstood; but have not intentionally omitted any essential feature of the doctrine of entire sanctification, as it has been taught here. Much that has been said here has been misunderstood and misrepresented, as is natural, when a teacher is surrounded by a multitude of critics eager to "catch him in his talk." Some things have been said, and some arguments employed, that would not bear investigation. Oberlin men have not been peculiar in this respect. But if any heresy has prevailed here on this subject, it is found in the positions I have here recorded.

Oberlin men were charged with lowering the claims of the Divine law. Yet, no place can be found in which a higher sense of moral obligation has prevailed than in this. It has been charged that Oberlin people have professed to be perfect, and to have at-

tained entire sanctification. Yet few such professions have ever been heard here. They have never been encouraged. While it has been maintained that Christians may be competent to testify that they are not conscious of present sin, it has not been held that they are competent to testify, in regard to any considerable past time, that they have not sinned.

All manner of evils were predicted to follow from the preaching of this doctrine; but thirty years have passed, and they have not appeared. No other community of three thousand permanent inhabitants, can be found more free from immorality. No intoxicating drinks were ever sold here as a beverage, except occasionally, for a very short time. No billiard saloon or bowling alley ever existed here. There was never a ball in the incorporation. A single effort for one proved a failure. Yet the young people are cheerful and happy, and enjoy all the social intercourse desirable. Persons seldom ride on the Sabbath for pleasure or recreation. Gambling and racing are never heard of here. No circus ever came within eight miles of the place. Infidelity, and Universalism and Spiritualism have been almost unknown here. A large portion of the people are Christians, and I know of no place where the Bible is more highly prized, or more generally studied, in Bible classes, and Sabbath Schools. There are not less than forty prayer meetings in a week continually. Every class in college has its weekly prayer meeting. The weekly young people's meeting has an average attendance of three hundred. There has been a weekly inquiry meeting for many years, which is seldom attended by less than ten, and sometimes by more than a hundred. There is not a more united, harmonious people in the world. Doctrines which have wrought so little mischief in so long a time should not have filled the country with alarm, and certainly would not, but for the pre-existing prejudice.

Complaint has been made against Oberlin that it divided churches and sought to break up the plan of union between the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The facts are as follows: The founders of the institution were Presbyterians. The Trustees belonged to churches connected with Presbyteries. Five of the original Faculty were Presbyterian ministers. The Oberlin church was connected with the Presbytery. All would have been willing to continue the connection; though, being of New England origin, they were favorable to Congregationalism. But so great was the opposition to Oberlin men, that a happy connection, or rather any connection at all, became impossible. Theological graduates were denied license for no other reason than that they favored Oberlin.

The first two young men that passed through the entire course of the Institution, applied for license to the Presbytery in the midst of which they had lived from childhood. They were unable to secure even an examination before the Presbytery. A committee was appointed to examine them in a private room, and report whether a public examination should be granted. The first question asked them was, "Do you believe in the way of doing things at Oberlin, and the doctrines taught there?" They begged to be excused from answering that question; for the committee had never visited Oberlin, and had no idea how things were done there, except by report. They begged to be allowed to stand on their own merits, and promised to answer fully and frankly as to their own views. A few other questions were asked, but the Oberlin question seemed the only important one, in their estimation; and it was finally put in such a way that it could not well be evaded. "Do you believe that Oberlin is on the whole a good Institution, or is it a curse to the world?" They replied that they thought it was a good Institution, and believed the committee would think so, if they would spend a week there. This was sufficient. One of the committee said he believed Oberlin was a curse to the world, and the sooner it was annihilated the better; and they were determined that the Presbytery should never be ruled by Oberlinites. They asked the young men why they came there for license, if they believed in Oberlin. They replied: "We have always been acquainted with the members of the Presbytery, the church in which we were brought up, and to which our parents belong, is connected with the Presbytery, and, though in sentiment we are Congregationalists, we think we should have no trouble with Presbyterians. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists have always been united on the Western Reserve, and we are not in favor of a separation. If a separation must take place, we are not willing to be responsible for it." The committee reported adversely to a public examination, and, after considerable discussion, the report was adopted. The committee said the young men were well educated, and appeared to be pious, and were undoubtedly called of God to preach, and they could bid them God speed, but were unwilling to admit them to the Presbytery. The young men returned to Oberlin, not particularly disappointed, but greatly grieved. They had been rejected by the fathers under whose preaching they had been converted and brought up. And the fathers were no less afflicted than they. They had discharged a most painful duty, which they had dreaded and tried to avoid. For they were aware of the intentions of the young men, and sought in private to dissuade them from making application

for license. They were good men, but terribly alarmed at what they supposed to be the dangerous influence of Oberlin; and felt called upon to perform this most disagreeable act for the protection of the churches. These young men now occupy important places in the Oberlin Faculty; and one of them has been constantly connected with the Institution since he entered as a student in 1834. They may, perhaps, be regarded as fair representatives of the spirit and influence of the College. Thus was the plan of union disturbed, and Oberlin set off by itself.

Many churches were divided by the Oberlin controversy; but Oberlin men did not favor the divisions, and could have prevented them only by silence. If they preached and published the doctrines they believed, some would embrace and some reject them. The result would be controversy and, often, division. The writer was once instrumental in dividing a church, on this wise. He was invited to lecture on slavery, in a country town, where he was a stranger. On arriving he found the church opened and warmed, and partly filled; but he was not allowed to enter till he had promised not to lecture without an invitation from the Trustees. After considerable loud discussion out of doors, a committee entered and asked if he was willing to lecture on the door-step. He replied, "Yes, if the Trustees request it." Being informed that the Trustees were willing, he knelt upon the door-step and prayed, and then lectured an hour, making no allusion to the action of the Trustees, and then left the place. In a few weeks the church was divided, and, not long after, the meeting-house was deserted, the majority of the Trustees, and the party that remained with them, having dwindled to nothing. I am not aware that the Oberlin Professors ever recommended the division of a church, unless it was too large. They often opposed division, and probably preached and published more in favor of Christian union than all the other ministers in the ten counties of the Reserve. Indeed, their unionism was one occasion of opposition. ✓

I will finish this disagreeable portion of my narrative with one more fact. In 1844 a Western Convention of Presbyterians and Congregationalists was held in Cleveland. The writer was a representative from Michigan, and the only Oberlin man in the Convention. The Conference with which the Oberlin church was connected was not invited to send representatives. But Pres. Mahan and Prof. Finney were present, and a motion was made and advocated by Dr. Duffield of Detroit, that they be invited to sit as corresponding members. This was voted down by a considerable majority. Much of the time was spent in denouncing Oberlin, and

the chief object of the Convention seemed to be to destroy its influence, and exclude it from the pale of orthodoxy. At this Convention, the Society for the promotion of Collegiate and Theological Education at the West was organized, and to its list of beneficiaries Oberlin was admitted five or six years ago. At this Convention the opposition to Oberlin culminated. From that time it gradually declined, till now it may be said to have disappeared.

In the course of this controversy Oberlin men acquired the reputation of being belligerent and self-confident. And it would not be strange if, under the remarkable tuition they enjoyed, there should have been an unusual development of back-bone, and, possibly, neglect of the finer grace of modesty. This, however, may, probably, be said with truth, that there were a hundred attacks upon Oberlin where there was one reply. And with one or two exceptions, the members of the Faculty were, by nature and by grace, averse to controversy. Prof. Henry Cowles, one of the most discreet and modest of men, for a long time editor of the Oberlin Evangelist, secured the title of "Ecclesiastical gladiator;" but could have made little show of a claim to it.

The effect of the opposition to Oberlin must have been disheartening to its enemies. For while they made no progress, the Institution gained a world-wide reputation; and without the trouble of advertising, became at once the largest literary institution at the West. Students came in from every Northern State, and some even from the South, till, after three years, the average yearly number was over five hundred; for the last fifteen years it has been eleven hundred and twenty three, in all departments.

This portion of my narrative would be incomplete and superficial if it should fail to record that the honor of raising up such an institution, at such a period in the history of our country, belongs to God alone. Human wisdom and goodness would never have planned or executed such a scheme. Sufficient imperfections and follies appeared to indicate the weakness of the human agencies employed; but human plans, and human prejudices, and human policy were all set at naught in the accomplishment of the grand design. Oberlin, in its peculiar and essential characteristics, could never have existed without the explosion at Lane. Previously it was a small colony and school with few attractions; forbidding in many respects, and almost inaccessible. What would have been its history, if left to a natural growth, it is impossible to conjecture. By whose plan it was that a large body of New York and New England men were gathered in a Seminary on the border of a slave State, near a city almost as pro-slavery as Kentucky itself,

under Trustees whose trade depended on the South; whose wisdom placed in contact this mass of powder and percussion caps, just as the blows of Garrison's *Liberator* were falling in every direction, each must judge for himself. It surely was no human arrangement. And, that the fragments of the exploded institution might not be scattered and lost, how remarkable that God should have had a place prepared for them in the wilderness, where they might be "nourished for a season," and prepared for his special work; and that the human founder of this refuge, with no such thought in his heart, but led by an influence he did not comprehend, should have been present, just at the time to open the door and invite them in. And there is little ground for human boasting in the fact that the Trustees of Oberlin, with the promise of a President, and a Theological Department ready manned, and considerable sums of money, did, after long discussion and delay, very timidly adopt, by the casting vote of their Moderator, a course opposed to that which they saw had exploded Lane. It was of God that such an array of motives were presented as secured their decision. Whose wisdom arranged that the warmest anti-slavery zeal, and the most fervent revival spirit, and the most powerful eloquence inspired by each, should here meet and together be consecrated to God; so that the most thoroughly anti-slavery place in the country has been the most earnestly religious! Who located Oberlin on an island, surrounded by forest and mud, sufficient to cool and calm the fury of any mob, and to keep out the spirit of speculation more dangerous still? And was it the plan of God to gather here poor and self-reliant young men and women, and thus make necessary a long winter vacation, that, by teaching and lecturing, they might gain a support, and so lead forth yearly, at the most favorable season of the year, a battalion equipped with truth and fired with anti-slavery zeal and the spirit of revivals? The last eight years before the war the number which thus went out through the land, averaged not less than five hundred a year. How much Oberlin had to do in preparing the West for the great struggle through which the nation has passed, God only knows, and to Him belongs the glory. And how much Oberlin has still to do in educating and christianizing the emancipated Negroes, in harmonizing the discordant elements of the country, and preparing the different races to live together in peace, it is impossible to tell. But it seems wonderfully opportune, divinely providential, that, just at this juncture, an institution should exist, where more than eleven hundred students a year, without distinction of race or color, should learn to respect each other's manhood and rights; and thus be in

the best manner prepared to meet our present emergencies. If this is not the Lord's work, what evidence have we that he does any work among the children of men?

The record of Oberlin during the war was what might have been anticipated from its previous history. Three days after Lincoln's first call for 75,000 men, two full companies were enlisted and \$10,000 subscribed. One company only was accepted, and that consisted of one hundred as valuable young men as ever met. Forty-one of them were members of the College and Theological classes; all were moral and temperate, and a majority of them religious. In three days more they were uniformed by the citizens and in camp. Nearly all of them re-enlisted for the war. They maintained a daily prayer meeting when circumstances permitted, and hence were called the praying company. But they fought and endured as well as they prayed. They were in many battles and endured many hardships, yet but one of them died of disease, and one in prison. Nearly one-third of them were killed, and many were wounded. Several other companies were largely composed of Oberlin students, and in all about 850 entered the army from this Institution; and all were volunteers. None of them, so far as is known, deserted, few of them were morally injured, and some of them were improved. When Cincinnati was threatened, the Governor's call for volunteers to defend it reached us in the morning, and in five hours a full company was organized, armed, provisioned and on the way. Thus promptly and generously did Oberlin meet all demands upon her till the danger was past. Of 166 young men in the four college classes in 1861, 100 entered the army as soldiers.

It seemed to some a great pity that so many valuable young men, religious, educated, so well qualified to do good, and so much needed, should sacrifice themselves upon the altar of their country. Let others go, they said, who can be better spared; who are not so important to the country and to the world. It was indeed sad to see the College Department diminished more than one half, and the Theological Department two-thirds. It would have seemed better economy if useless, worthless men enough could have been found to expose themselves to slaughter. Such considerations were sometimes presented, but they had little weight with the earnest young men assembled here. Their country was in peril, liberty and our free institutions were imperiled. They could not feel that they were too good or too important to rush to their defence. They could not say, "You go; my life is too important to be sacrificed in this cause." The officers of the College scrupulously abstained from influencing students to volunteer, and refused

permission to those under age, till they obtained the consent of their parents or guardians. Colored young men offered their services at the outset, but the country felt no need of them. They were told that they would be wanted before the war was over; for it was never the expectation here that the war would end till slavery ended; nor that the slaves would be freed without their own assistance.

We now turn from these general characteristics of Oberlin to more particular features of the Institution.

The manual labor system can hardly be said to have been a success. The first year students were required to labor four hours a day, and work was furnished by the College; for young men in the shops and on the farm, and for young ladies in the domestic department. The catalogue of the second year states that students were expected to labor three hours daily. The third year it was announced that nearly all the ladies and a majority of the young gentlemen had paid their board by manual labor. Three hours daily labor was still required. We find no statement on the subject for the fourth year. No catalogue was published. The Institution had entered upon an experience from which it has never recovered,—“More students than money.” The catalogue of the fifth year says: “At present no pledge can be given that the Institute will furnish labor to all the students; but hitherto nearly all have been able to obtain employment from either the Institute or the colonists.” Henceforth the requirement to labor passed into a recommendation. The following statements embody, in substance, the results of the experiment: 1. No business can be profitably carried on by students’ labor at such prices as would be satisfactory to the laborer, unless the employer can have the privilege of selection from the students. The majority will be so feeble, so inexperienced, so inefficient, so absorbed in their studies, so heedless, or so disgusted at the very idea of labor, that the expense for superintendence and tools will exceed the value of their labor, at three hours a day. In a reform school, where more rigid discipline is allowable, and escape is impossible, it would be otherwise. In a female seminary the domestic labor may be chiefly performed by the pupils, though some will shirk, while others will over work. 2. Students may labor two or three hours a day without detriment, but with advantage, both to the body and the mind, and to their progress in study; and may at the same time acquire habits of industry and knowledge of business, which will be of great advantage in after life, and eminently fit them for pioneer missionaries in any field. 3. Hundreds of students have mainly or entirely

supported themselves through the entire course by manual labor, and teaching in vacation; and many of them have been superior scholars. 4. Manual labor is not disreputable here. Students forfeit no social advantages or attention by laboring for their own support. "Learning and Labor" is the motto of the College seal. Nearly all the Faculty were once manual labor students, and keep up the habit still. 5. Diligent and faithful young men can usually find employment, with satisfactory compensation, in the village and about the College buildings. The College farm originally consisting of 500 acres, is leased to permanent residents, who engage to furnish employment to students in proportion to the amount of land they occupy.

The experiment of educating ladies and gentlemen in the same school and the same classes has proved eminently successful. For a full exposition of this subject, I refer the reader to an address of the President, delivered before a meeting of College Presidents at Springfield, Ill., July 10, 1867, and published in the Illinois Teacher and in Barnard's American Journal of Education, for January, 1868. In regard to the wisdom of this arrangement, there is but one opinion here. An experience of thirty-four years has convinced every officer of this Institution that it is promotive of good scholarship, correct deportment, and agreeable manners, in both sexes; and is attended with less dangers than the system of separation. So far as they pursue the same studies, they generally recite in the same classes, both in the Preparatory and College Departments. They attend church, chapel prayers and prayer meetings together; they sit at the same tables in the College dining hall, which accommodates a hundred ladies who room in the same building, and a hundred young men; and many of them board in the same private families; and under careful restrictions and wholesome regulations, which extend to all private houses where students board, they enjoy such social intercourse as young people need. The many evils which were predicted, and which many still believe to be inevitable in such a school, do not occur. An occasional unhappy flirtation takes place, and, now and then, an unfortunate engagement; but they occur every where, and, probably, in no place more seldom than here. It would be surprising to many mere theorists to see with what readiness and good sense a multitude of young people, when treated with proper confidence, will yield to the necessary regulations of their social intercourse. There is seldom an occurrence which is occasion of serious anxiety to those who have the principal oversight of the young people in this respect. The fact that not less than twenty young colleges at the

West have adopted the same plan is an indication that the system has already secured, to a great extent, the confidence of the people. There may be colleges and communities where this system could not be safely introduced; our experience relates only to a community unusually religious and orderly.

The Ladies' course of study is not excelled by that of any Female Seminary in the country. It is a four years' course, after a thorough preparation in the common English branches, also two terms of Algebra and three of Latin. They have also the advantage of reciting to College Professors, in the regular College classes. A few take the regular college course, which is equal to that of the best Colleges in the country; and their standing is not inferior to that of the young men.

We are often questioned as to the standing of our colored students. But few of our colored students have graduated. The most of them have only sought a business education. And so great has been the demand for their services as teachers, that some who had designed to take a full course have been turned aside. Fifteen young men and two young ladies have taken the degree of A. B., and fourteen young ladies have completed the Ladies' Course. Of these the President says in an address to the Alumni, "Most of them have occupied a fair position among their fellows in scholarly attainment and cultivation. It might be safe to say of one of them that he has had no superior in literary taste, or in ability as a linguist. Others have excelled in other departments of study." The testimony of the Principal of the Preparatory Department is that there is no essential difference, other things being equal, between their standing and that of the white students. Some are among the best and some are among the poorest. The same is said to be true in the Union School, where one-third of the pupils are colored. Of our colored citizens, who compose one-fifth of the population, it is a pleasure to say that, in general, they are peaceable, orderly, industrious, and rapidly improving in cultivation and the comforts of life. They mingle freely with the white population in all the business relations of life, without the least danger of a "war of races," or any other collision. It is found as easy and agreeable to sit in the Town Council or on the Board of School Directors with a Negro, as in a barber's shop or a barouche. Many of them, having recently come from slavery, retain, in a great measure, the ignorance and peculiar habits of that institution. A more intelligent, cultivated population would be desirable; but if asked to exchange them for an equal number of foreigners, of which we have none, we should beg to be excused.

The teaching force of the Institution consists of a Faculty of thirteen gentlemen,—the President, three Theological Professors, seven College Professors, the Principal of the Preparatory Department, and a Professor of Music; also the Principal of the Ladies' Department and her Assistant, and about forty others, taken chiefly from the College and Theological classes, who instruct a class or two apiece. There is great need of another Professor in the Theological Department. Diligent efforts are being made to supply this want. The vacant chair has been offered to a most excellent clergyman, a superior scholar, of the Presbyterian Denomination. He has not yet signified his willingness to accept the appointment. The President gives instruction in this department.

In consequence of the disturbance of the College classes and of this department by the war, it is at present in a depressed condition. From thirty-six students before the war, it is now reduced to a dozen. The prospects for the future, however, are not discouraging. It is confidentially believed that, with proper effort, it may soon become as vigorous and useful as ever.

This Institution sustains no organic relation to any religious denomination, but in principle and practice it is Congregational. The Trustees, with one exception, and the Faculty are connected with Congregational Churches, and the ministers who have been educated here are nearly all Congregationalists. There are two large Congregational Churches in the village, which are so liberal in principle and practice that the necessity for other churches has hardly been felt. Christians of all denominations have been made to feel very much at home with them. It was for many years a special desire and aim of this people to demonstrate that christians can dwell together in unity; that all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, holding the doctrines that are essential to christian character, can live harmoniously in the same church, though differing in regard to those doctrines and practices which separate the different denominations of christians. And so successful has the experiment been that, though christians of nearly all denominations have united with these churches, I have never heard of a single case of discord or serious friction between members in consequence of their different denominational views. A very few families, several years ago, feeling the want of the Episcopal service, organized a small Episcopal Church, which has been blessed with an excellent pastor, in hearty sympathy with the general spirit of the place, and is now in a flourishing condition. A Baptist Church has been recently organized for the accommodation of those who cannot conscientiously commune with their christian brethren

who differ from them as to the mode of baptism. Their present minister is a very worthy and talented young man, a member of the Theological Department, and a graduate of the College. There is also a small Wesleyan Methodist Church, for the benefit, principally, of a portion of the colored people, who could not have courage to exercise their usual liberty in the large Congregational Churches. Several efforts have been made to sustain a Methodist Episcopal Church here, but they have not been successful. Methodists find themselves so well accommodated with the Congregationalists that they cannot feel the necessity for a church by themselves. There is no College church. But the students are required, at the commencement of every term, to choose their place of worship, and then to attend, twice on the Sabbath, at that place. This mingling of the students and people and professors in the same religious meetings tends, more than anything else, to promote harmony and kindly interest between the College and the people. It is not simply as boarders that the people know the students; but listening to the same sermons, lectures, and prayers; being connected as teachers and pupils with the same Sabbath Schools and Bible classes, and belonging to the same choirs, their themes of conversation are, to a great extent, the same; their anxieties, interests and aims are similar, and the influence is exceedingly wholesome to both classes. The union also adds greatly to the *interest* of the religious meetings. The congregations are large and the choirs full; and the people feel that, through the thousand students associated with them, their spirit, and habits, and views are to influence millions abroad. With one exception, the congregation of the first church is, probably, the largest in the country. The choir numbers from one hundred to one hundred and fifty well trained singers. The concerts which they give on commencement occasions are celebrated through the country. The church edifice is similar to Beecher's in Brooklyn.

On the subject of College discipline, I can do nothing better than to insert an extract from an address delivered by the President in 1860. The same remarks would be equally applicable now.

"The discipline of the school has had from the beginning some peculiarities. Circumstances were favorable for the initiation of changes in the usual system of college discipline. The students first gathered here, were not *sent* to school—they *came*. They were serious-minded, earnest young people, with no thought but to make the most of their time and opportunities. They needed suggestions and instructions—not much restraint. The early students will remem'ber that for years we had no roll called for recitation

—no marking for performance—no monitor to note absences from public exercises, and no account rendered in any way. There were published regulations—not printed—to which all were expected to conform. A high degree of familiarity was maintained between Faculty and students. The least advanced member of the Preparatory Department felt free to salute the President of the Institution as brother, and the salutation was accepted as sufficiently respectful. To an outsider this familiarity sometimes seemed shocking. He did not apprehend the spirit of it; and because of the absence of certain formalities usual in colleges—the lifting of the hat and the stately recognition—he arrived at the conclusion that the students were lacking in genuine respect for their teachers. There could be no greater mistake. The respect and confidence was so hearty that stately formalities would have seemed as much out of place as between parents and children.

Such a field afforded a good opportunity for dispensing with the strict surveillance of the monitorial and marking systems, and making large account of the principles of confidence, self-respect and honor. The self-reporting system has been in operation these many years, each student giving account of his performance of certain prescribed duties. The appeal is made to his honor and self-respect; and while these doubtless fail at times, the tendency of the system is not to break them down. It is not considered smart to give a false report of attendance upon prayers and public worship, as it is wont to be to evade the observation of a monitor, or deceive an obnoxious tutor. The past eight years, a record has been kept by each teacher of the performance in recitation—not for the purpose of grading or indicating the standing in any public way, but for the more exact information of teacher and pupil, giving each an opportunity, as surveyors say, for back-sight and fore-sight.

The cases of individual discipline among us have always been surprisingly few, and are mostly confined to the Preparatory Department, which almost all new comers enter. More than ten years have elapsed since a student has been expelled or dismissed, in the way of discipline, from any of the college classes. The average number of college students during that time has been 109, and stands now at 181. About eight years ago the number of students in the institution arose, in a single year, from 571 to 1020, and the next year to 1305, and since that time has averaged more than 1200 yearly; yet there has been no corresponding increase in the number of cases of discipline. A more thorough system of supervision

has been secured, and all operations are more completely systemized; but the time spent by the Faculty upon *cases* has not been perceptibly increased.

There are many influences which conduce to good order; and among these I would mention, first, the sense of responsibility which attaches to each pupil, to maintain his good name. Our college community is not so secluded that a student can have a college reputation, as distinct from his reputation in general society. The presence of both sexes in the school does much to secure this result. Few of the hundreds here will ever find a place where their personal reputation will seem of more value to them than at present. If they ever intend that a good name shall forward their interests, this is the time and place. It is difficult to over-estimate this force.

Then again, the interest which has always prevailed in the school, in questions of moment in the outer world, such as slavery and politics, has been favorable. The intellectual activity, generated in a large school, must have an object, and if nothing worthy and elevated is afforded, it will fasten upon things trivial or degrading. It seems eminently fit that youth, in process of education should ponder and form opinions upon the great moral and political questions which agitate the world. Even erroneous and partial opinions are better than indifference. Exclude such questions from a school, and other questions will be raised, unworthy of attention. College politics take the place of general politics, and the question—who shall be President of a Literary Society, awakens intenser feeling than who shall be President of the Republic. These graver questions are, by some, thought to produce unwholesome excitements in schools, but the enthusiasm which they call out is a generous emotion, not like the petty and contemptible strifes which sometimes agitate the college community. The spirit begotten is elevated and manly, and conduces to an elevated and worthy character. In this respect we have been favored. Questions of serious and weighty interest, of right and wrong, pertaining to the duties of the government and the rights of citizens, have been thrust upon us, in such practical forms as compelled thought and action. We have needed no artificial employment of our activities. All this has tended to good order. Small matters become occasions of excitement and rebellion in colleges. It would often seem that the less the occasion, the more intense the feeling. But these small matters are excluded by greater. We have never had a rebellion here, not from the absence of spirit and excitability, but from the presence of worthier objects.

Still another feature in our college system, is the employment of so large a number of the more advanced and influential students; as teachers of the classes in the Preparatory Department. This arrangement is valuable in many ways. It secures to the student a desirable means of discipline and culture; an arrangement, according to Sir William Hamilton, essential to the best system of education. It furnishes substantial material aid to many who, without such resource, would be straitened for means to pursue study. It secures to the Institution, instruction of a high character, at rates lower than are paid in common schools, thus greatly reducing the price of tuition to the pupil. But beyond this, it is a disciplinary arrangement of immense value, bringing a large number of leading students into the double relation of teachers and pupils. Thus a link is established between Faculty and students, which enables them better to understand and appreciate each other; and thus the government is brought, in the least offensive way, into immediate contact with the mass of the students. These teachers have no authority out of the recitation room, but they are a powerful influence on the side of good order.

While the general outcome of our system of discipline is thus satisfactory, it must not be supposed that it is in all cases successful, and that there are not instances in which the aims of teachers are frustrated, and the hopes of parents and friends disappointed. There is no complete immunity from temptation in Oberlin, and has never been. Those who are propense to evil company have always been able to find it; and those to whom a direct, vigilant oversight is essential, are not likely to prosper here. But many who would resist such supervision, and deteriorate under it, are found susceptible to more generous motives, and make rapid progress."

The expenses of a student in Oberlin for all things except books, are about five dollars a week; twice what they were ten years ago. Many spend more and many less than this amount. This is about the average.

The buildings belonging to the college are seven in number, and estimated to be worth about \$80,000. The largest and best is the Ladies' Hall, which furnishes private rooms for one hundred ladies, such public rooms as are necessary for the Ladies' Department, and a dining hall sufficient for the accommodation of two hundred. Tappan Hall, erected in 1835-6, by the liberality of Arthur Tappan, is a dormitory building, and accommodates about one hundred young men. It also contains a reading room and

several recitation rooms. This is the central building, and should be the best. In its day it was a superb structure, to be located in a forest; and it has done most excellent service. But it was cheaply built, in very plain style; the rooms are small, adapted to the times of rigid economy, and the whole appearance of the building is unsatisfactory. Blessings on the man who, for the good of the world, and in honor of the noble man whose name it bears, shall re-erect this central building in a style and with accommodations adapted to the age! Such a man has the matter in contemplation. May the Lord prosper him! These two are the only dormitory buildings needed. The majority of the students can find comfortable rooms in private houses, sufficiently near the college buildings. The chapel is a good building, furnishing recitation rooms for the Theological Department, and Institution offices below, and a large audience room above. Two commodious buildings have recently been erected for recitation rooms and other purposes, which give entire satisfaction. One more large building is needed for the Library, the Cabinet, and the Departments of Chemistry and Natural History, which now occupy rooms quite inadequate. This will be commenced as soon as the state of the finances will allow. When it is completed, two small buildings now used will be removed from the college grounds.

The college square embraces fifteen acres in the centre of the village. The permanent college buildings, except the Ladies' Hall, are on the square, and other public buildings about it. The square is well supplied with shade trees, deciduous, and evergreen; and, during the summer season, is very pleasant.

There are four libraries connected with the Institution, embracing, in all, about ten thousand volumes. Two or three friends have it in their hearts to enlarge the library whenever an adequate room shall be provided.

The permanent endowment fund is now about \$160,000. About \$80,000 of this was raised in 1852 by the sale of scholarships. These were of three classes: one class entitling the holder to tuition for six years, another for eighteen years, and the other perpetually. The prices of these scholarships were \$25, \$50 and \$100. Being so very cheap, it was necessary to sell a large number to secure the amount. And being transferable, and renting for \$6 to \$9 a year, and tuition being \$15 a year, the college, of course, received no tuition after the scholarship system went into operation, till many of the six year scholarships were exhausted. This measure, which has been unprofitable to some colleges, was eminently wise and successful

here. The money thus secured has been safely and profitably invested, and the income from it is much more than the college ever received from tuition. The present income of the college for the support of teachers, both from the endowment and from tuition, is about \$15,000. The salaries of the professors and other instructors amount to nearly \$19,000 a year; so that the annual expenses of the college, in this department, exceed its income by about \$4,000. Other expenses of the college are amply provided for by rent, and by an incidental fee of \$6 a year to each student. Besides the endowment fund, the college owns land, in various localities, valued at from \$20,000 to \$30,000. There are also uncollected subscriptions, good and bad, long and short, amounting to over \$40,000. This land well sold, and these subscriptions well collected, would erect the large building so imperatively needed, also an observatory, besides supplying the deficit in current expenses for several years. But much of this land has been for sale more than fifteen years, and has been an expense rather than a source of income. It may and may not soon be disposed of. The Trustees would hardly feel justified in undertaking the erection of the large building so much needed, on the strength of this land and these uncollected subscriptions. If some benevolent man would devote \$10,000 to this important work, he would relieve a present necessity, and would be remembered with gratitude by all the officers of the college, and by a thousand students every year. If then three other good men would each endow a professorship, the essential wants of the college would be permanently met. It would be safe to depend on the bequests, which will from time to time be made, for future improvements.

This narrative would be incomplete without some notice of the recent discussions in the place on the subject of Freemasonry. Among the rules early adopted for the government of the college, there was one prohibiting students from connecting themselves with secret societies. This rule was understood to apply primarily to such secret societies as are common in colleges, and are believed to be often the source of much mischief. But in its terms it included all secret societies. It has been always interpreted to prohibit only active connection with such societies, while students are on the ground. They have never been questioned as to their connection with them in other places. No case of discipline has ever occurred under this rule. A single young man asked and received an honorable dismissal from the Institution, on the ground of his desire to have active connection with the Grand Army of

the Republic. Such has been the influence of the rule, and of the sentiment which sustained it, that, with the exception of a small division of the Sons of Temperance, which flourished a few weeks, no secret society ever existed in the place, till the winter of 1867. While the attention of the mass of the people was engaged in a powerful revival of religion, a small lodge of Freemasons was quietly organized. The organization, however, was not participated in by some prominent citizens of the place, who had belonged to lodges in other places. The subject came up for general discussion on the application of two or three members of the lodge for admission to the Congregational churches. It was discussed earnestly in the church meetings, was made the theme of several discourses on the Sabbath, and was a prominent topic of conversation for several months. The result has been an almost perfect unanimity of sentiment in opposition to the institution of Masonry. Resolutions representing the character and tendencies of the order as evil, and contrary to the principles of christianity, were adopted in both churches, large numbers being present, without a dissenting vote. Probably not more than a dozen were silent. No active Mason, known to be such, has been admitted to either church. The only manifest division was on the propriety of adopting a standing rule against the admission of adhering Masons to the churches. The first church adopted the rule, the second did not. Whether there will be any practical difference between them, it is too early to predict.

The whole number of graduates from all departments of Oberlin College, not including the Teachers' or Scientific Course, is 1190. From the Theological Department 244. From the regular College Department 444 gentlemen and 86 ladies. From the Ladies' Course 416. Of the College graduates 186 have entered the ministry, 47 have become lawyers, 27 physicians, 122 Professors and teachers. About one-fourth of them are residents of Ohio, and one-third of the Western and Northwestern States. A very large number who never finished their college course have entered the ministry and other professions. The Preparatory Department, which furnishes not only a preparation for College, but also a thorough preparation for teaching and for business, is the largest department of the Institution. The young men in this department average about nineteen years of age. It is from this department that a majority of the five hundred teachers a year have been furnished. During the long winter vacation an important school is maintained by the members of the Faculty, called the Winter School. Its average

number of attendants is about 275. Their names are not included in the College catalogue. The Business Institution in this place has no connection with the College.

Just as this narrative is completed, a letter comes from one of the first students of Oberlin, Mayo G. Smith, from which I borrow a brief extract. He says:

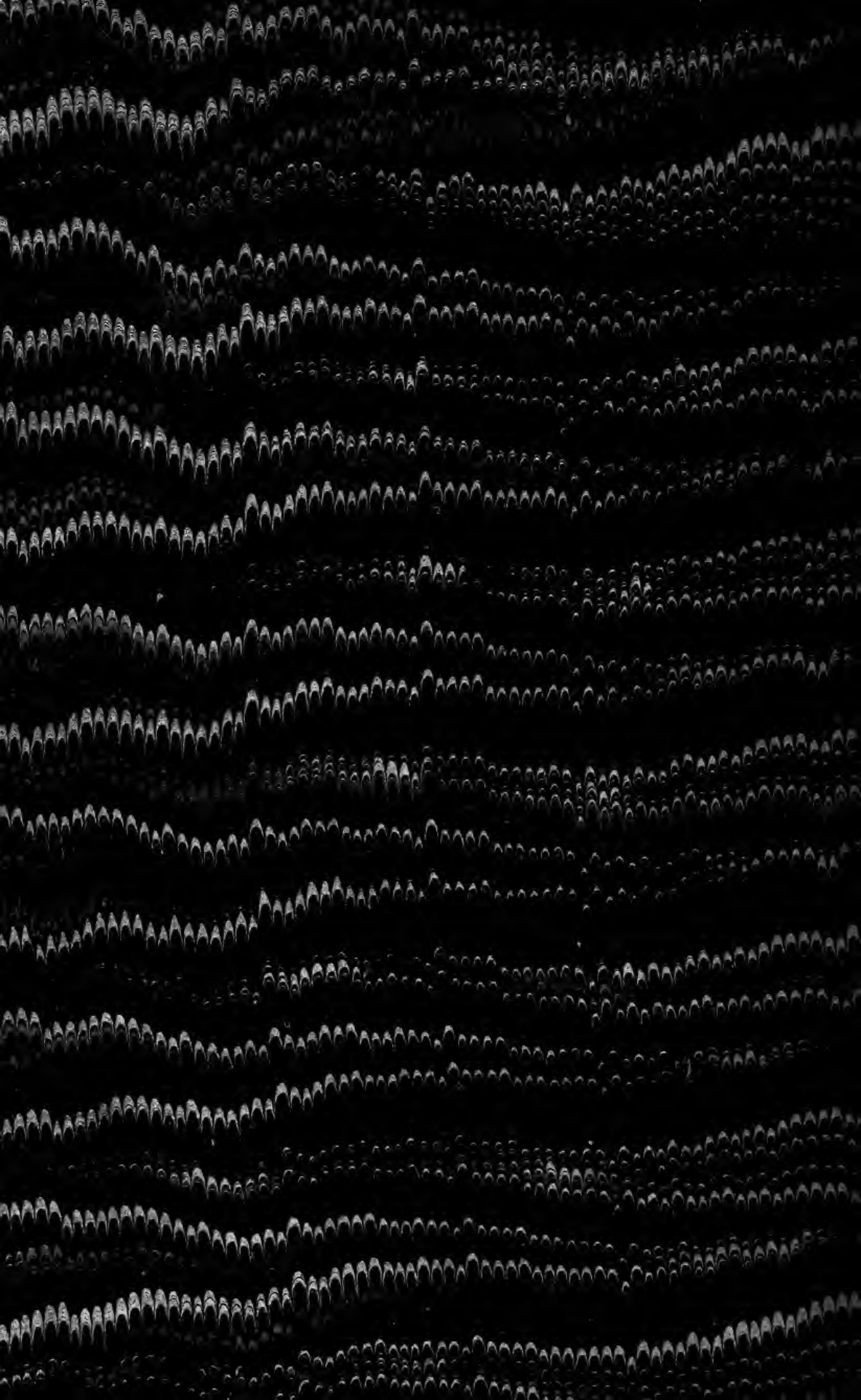
"Returning from my travels in the Holy Land, I went to Oberlin's people, his church, his grave. Wedged between the everlasting Alpine hills are fifteen hundred men, women, and children, all Protestants. All love and venerate the name of Oberlin. Surrounded by Papists, this community has no dissenting voice. The spirit of Oberlin yet holds the whole commune. Prayer and praise ascend from every house. Bible classes and the secular and sacred instrumentalities unite and consolidate all into one church of 450 members. The whole place is a mountain nest of loving brothers and sisters, who rejoiced to know that in my country one of the most powerful colleges in the world bore the name of their great and good Oberlin. Commemorative of good Oberlin's labor among them, they celebrated the anniversary of his advent. The church was decorated with floral ornaments, and, from the end of a wreath of mountain mosses pendant from his pulpit, I send a clipping." After describing other precious relics obtained there, he adds: "With a love for you, dear Oberlin, which makes the sacrifice sweet, I give all to my Alma Mater."

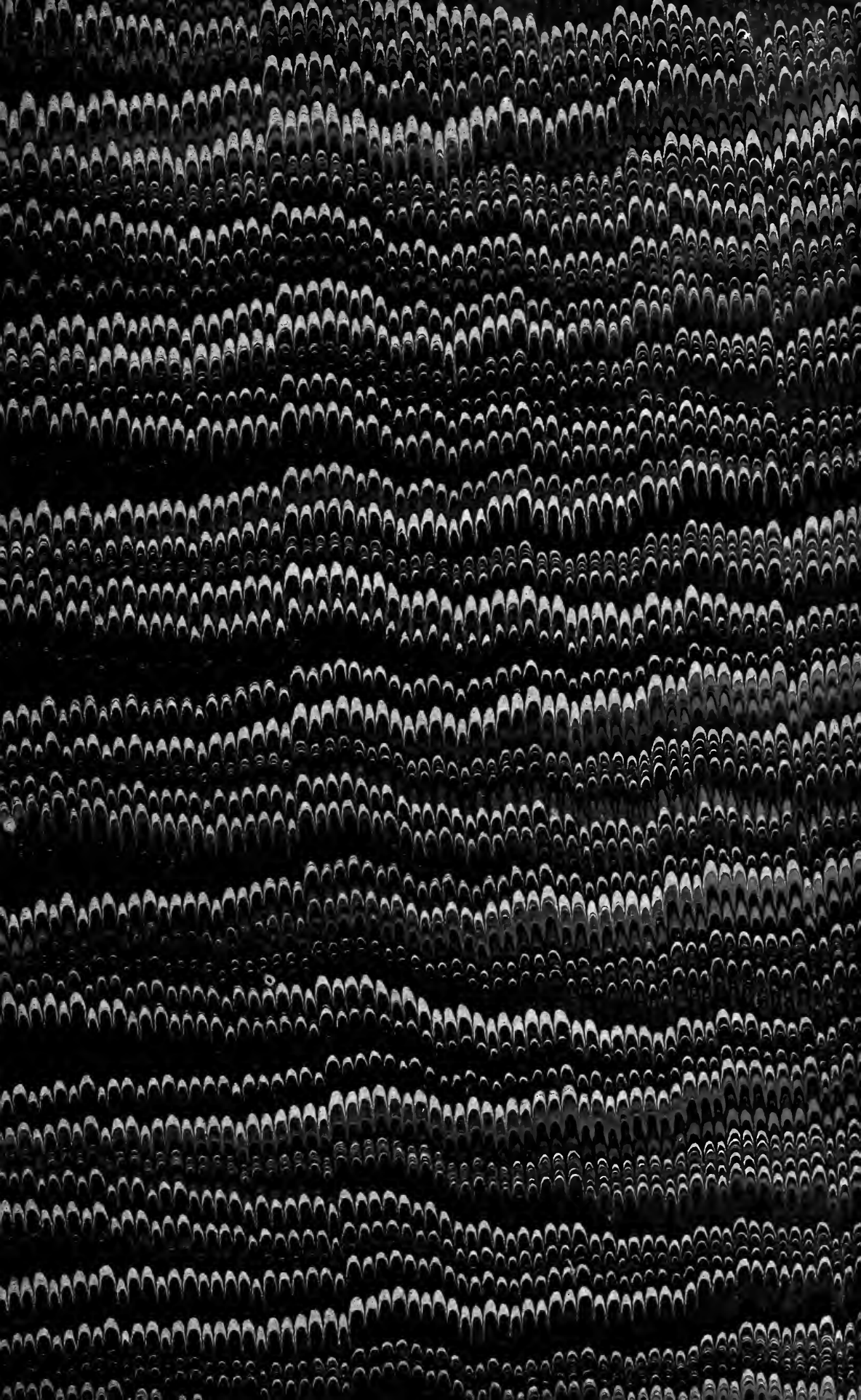
And thus may the memory of Oberlin be cherished by all her children. May they have good reason, always, to "rise up and call her blessed."











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